



## **NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release:  
April 26, 2004

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### **North Dakota Suicide Prevention Conference Scheduled**

BISMARCK, N.D. – “Strengthening Communities” is the theme of the North Dakota Suicide Prevention Conference to be held April 28 and 29, 2004, at the Radisson Inn, Bismarck, N.D. The conference will bring local, state and national partners together to approach suicide as a preventable problem with realistic approaches to saving lives.

Suicides are a major public health issue nationally and in North Dakota. The nation loses 30,000 lives to this tragedy each year, and another 650,000 people receive emergency care after attempting to take their own lives. In 2002-2003, 163 North Dakotans died from suicide.

Featured speakers for the conference include David Litts from the National Suicide Prevention Resource Center, Washington, D.C., and Arnold Thomas, a suicide survivor from Salt Lake City. Litts is nationally recognized for his work with the U.S. Surgeon General in developing the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action. Thomas is a motivational speaker who shares his experience with a suicide attempt when he was 18 years old that destroyed his original dreams and goals. Arnold went on to earn a master’s degree in social work and has become a national leader in suicide prevention.

The conference is open to anyone interested in prevention of suicides. A candle-lighting ceremony to remember those who have died from suicide will be held Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. at the Radisson. The ceremony is open to the public, and there is no charge to attend.

For more information, contact Carol Meidinger at 328.4537.

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*Please note: Conference agenda follows.*

**North Dakota Suicide Prevention Conference**  
**“Strengthening Communities”**  
**April 28-29, 2004**  
**Radisson Inn – Bismarck**

**Wednesday, April 28**

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|---------------|--|
| 9:00 – 10:00  | Registration   |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | Welcome<br>Arvy Smith, Deputy State Health Officer<br>Mark LoMurray, ND Adolescent Suicide Prevention Project  |
| 10:15 – 11:15 | <a href="#">Achieving Success in Community Suicide Prevention</a><br>David Litts, National Suicide Prevention Resource Center  |
| 11:15 – 12:00 | <a href="#">Suicide Prevention in North Dakota</a><br>Carol Meidinger, ND Department of Health<br>Mark LoMurray  |
| 12:00 – 1:30  | Lunch – Provided<br>Prevention Awards  |
| 1:30 – 2:30   | <a href="#">“I Want to Live”</a><br>Arnold Thomas, MSW   |
| 2:30 – 3:00   | Break/View Exhibits  |
| 3:00 – 4:30   | <a href="#">Concurrent Workshops</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Survivor’s Role In Prevention<br/>Arnold Thomas</li><li>B. Effective Teen-Lead Prevention<br/>Mark LoMurray, Teen Panel</li><li>C. School/Community Gatekeeper Models<br/>Deb Hanson, MSW, Volk Human Services<br/>Nancy Krebsbach, McLean Family Services</li><li>D. Small-Group Support – The Faith-Based Approach<br/>Fr. Cyprian Meier, Spirit of Life Church, Mandan<br/>Pastor Mark Phillips, Harvey Assembly of God Church<br/>Sloane Floberg, Standing Rock Young Life</li><li>E. USAF Suicide Prevention Program<br/>Dr. David Litts, National Suicide Prevention Resource Center</li></ul> |

- F. A Physician's Perspective on Understanding Youth Behaviors and Issues Surrounding Suicide  
Todd Twogood, MD, MedCenter One, Bismarck

6:30 – 7:45                    [Remembrance Ceremony](#)  
Arnold Thomas

### [Thursday, April 29](#)

7:30- 8:15                    Continental Breakfast/View Exhibits

8:30 – 9:45                    [Strengthening Your Community](#)  
Clayton Small, Director, Northern Cheyenne Health Center

9:45 – 10:00                  Video Review

10:00 – 10:30                Break/View Exhibits

10:30 – 11:45                [Identifying and Mobilizing Resources Within American Indian Communities](#)  
Marlene EchoHawk, PhD, Indian Health Services Headquarters

12:00 – 1:15                  Lunch – Provided  
One Act Play - "The Bright Blue Mailbox Suicide Note"  
Washburn High School Drama Club

1:15 – 2:15                    [Survivor Panel](#)  
Cressy Liljenquist, Deb Carroll, Tony Two Bears, Lois Two Bears

2:15 – 2:30                    Break

2:30 – 3:30                    [Concurrent Workshops](#)

- A. Support for Survivors  
Deb Carroll, Lois Two Bears, Tony Two Bears, Margaret Gates
- B. Teens Changing Their Communities  
Clayton Small, Northern Cheyenne Health Center
- C. Early Screening – School/Community Models  
Deb Hanson, MSW, Volk Human Services  
Dr. John Collins, MedCenter One  
Lisa Faul, Prairie St. John's
- D. Mentoring and Multiple Supports in Suicide Prevention Efforts  
Mark LoMurray
- E. First Responders Role In Suicide Prevention Education  
Cressy Liljenquist, Wellness in the Valley Project

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*Visit the health department home page at [www.health.state.nd.us](http://www.health.state.nd.us)*

3:30 – 4:00	Wrap Up – “Accepting the Challenge” Mark LoMurray
4:00	Adjourn